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**REVENUE DEPARTMENT THANKS TAXPAYERS FOR FILING EARLY, ELECTRONICALLY**  
**Encourages more taxpayers to beat the final rush**

HELENA -- Even though the April filing deadline for individual income tax is a month away, the Montana Department of Revenue has already issued more than half of the refunds it expects to give taxpayers this tax season.

So far, the department has processed about 201,600 of the anticipated 370,000 refund requests, which is about 2,700 refunds ahead of the number issued by this same time last year.

The accelerated refund processing is due to more taxpayers filing early and filing electronically, said revenue director Dan Bucks.

"We thank Montanans for promptly filing their tax returns," said Bucks.

On average, individual income tax refunds are being issued in about 4 - 6 days for returns filed electronically and about 18 - 20 days for returns filed on paper. The average refund is running about \$400 this year, which is slightly less than last year.

The total number of individual income tax returns processed, including those with payments, is also up this year. The department has processed about 264,900 returns out of an anticipated 522,000 returns, which is about 4,700 returns ahead of the number processed by this same time last year.

Bucks encouraged Montana taxpayers to continue to file early.

"Even though we're more than halfway through the tax season, it's not too late to beat the crowd," said Bucks. "The earlier you file, the better service we can provide in getting your return processed and your refund issued to you."

And, even if you don't plan to file early, Bucks said, your tax return needs to be filed on time. By law, the annual filing deadline is April 15; however, because of the observance of Emancipation Day in Washington, D.C., this year returns will be accepted until April 18 without penalties for late filing and late payment.

Bucks also encouraged taxpayers to file electronically.

This year, Montana taxpayers can electronically file all four of the Montana individual income tax forms for free by using Taxpayer Access Point (TAP) on the department's website at [revenue.mt.gov](http://revenue.mt.gov). Those forms are the 2EZ (short form), 2M (intermediate form), 2 (long form), and 2EC (elderly homeowner/renter credit form).

"If you are filing any of these forms, this is definitely a great way to file," said Bucks. Last year, more than 70 percent of Montana taxpayers filed electronically.

Taxpayers also can take advantage of other options to file electronically, including utilizing an authorized e-file tax professional, using an off-the-shelf software program installed on a personal computer with Internet access, or using online software on a personal computer with Internet

access. Some taxpayers also may qualify to prepare and submit their state and federal taxes online for free, through services such as MontanaFreeFile.org, a “one-stop” website that provides information on free tax preparation and electronic filing to eligible taxpayers.

“If you file your tax return electronically and request direct deposit, it is possible to get your refund in less than a week,” said Bucks. “That’s pretty quick.”

The department’s website at [revenue.mt.gov](http://revenue.mt.gov) contains helpful income tax information, downloadable forms/instructions, important updates, electronic payment options, and filing tips. In addition, taxpayers can get personal assistance by calling the department toll-free at (866) 859-2254 (in Helena, 444-6900).

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